

October 2, 2017



Obedience or Information Based Discipleship



The Great Commission of Mt 28:18-19 is not primarily focused on making decisions or teaching information **about** Jesus. It is about "making disciples **of** Jesus...teaching them to obey (put into practice) everything He has said."

Making decisions and learning information is important but the question we should be asking is where are those decisions and that information heading?

Our main call is helping people know and follow Jesus and put into practice what He says. Godliness isn't determined by what we know but by Who we know and where we are in following and obeying Him.

We need to fundamentally change our view and practice in the church of the Matthew 28 Great Commission. We do not want to be a church that simply draws people to meetings and programs on Sundays or Wednesdays. We don't want to facilitate an audience of watching stones, but a spiritual temple full of living stones (1 Peter 2:1-4) who follow and obey Him.

There is a difference between attracting an audience of consumers rather than gathering a family of disciples. If all that a church values is nickels and noses they might end up with the former but miss the latter. Jesus didn't simply focus on attracting crowds but making disciples.

Jesus had an aim when He gave His life. It was to have a "people for His own possession who are zealous for good works" (Tit 2:14). He didn't die to gather an isolated or loose collection of consumers heading for heaven. He continues to work to create a family of people who offer proof of the gospel in their everyday world as they follow and obey Him together with others.

**Christianity without
discipleship is
always Christianity
without Christ. --
Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

The church often reduces the idea of discipleship to gaining information rather than a life following and obeying Jesus. When Christians are educated beyond their level of obedience they become spiritual schizophrenics. They tend to be experts in knowing what they are not doing. Unfortunately, they can often become pharisaical as they expect others to pursue the things they themselves are not pursuing (Lk 11:37-54, Jn 8:31-44).

Increasing our deception or our obedience?

When we share, preach, or study God's word together, we are not simply trying to increase our knowledge about the Bible or Jesus. We are trying to increase our experience of, and our obedience to Him. If we don't do that, our gatherings and study of the Scripture has the potential to increase self-deception in thinking we are blessed by knowing rather than obeying His word; "if you know these things you are blessed if you do them" (Jn 13:17). James said that this is self-deception; "Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice " (James 1:22).

Think about walking past a son or daughter's room which is very dirty and messy. You speak to them as a loving parent, "I love you and want what is best for you...how about cleaning your room?" Their response, "thank you daddy, I love hearing your words, I am so blessed!"

A few days later you walk past the room in the same messy condition and ask your child, "I thought I told you to clean your room!" "You did daddy and I memorized you words. I wrote them down and repeated them 6 times a day...I am so blessed by your words." Your reply, "But you still haven't cleaned you room...please clean it."

A few days later you check again and nothing has changed. You find you child and asked again why they didn't do it. "Dad an amazing thing happened, I met some other kids at

Check it out and sign up



school whose parents told them to clean their rooms. We met together to encourage and pray for each other about our parents' words. We decided to translate and study your words in the original Greek language of the Bible. It was great! We prayed for each other to keep those words in our hearts. We are so blessed to be able repeat your words in both Greek and English language. We are so blessed by you and your words!" Finally in frustration you say, "I don't want you to be blessed by hearing my words I want you to put them into practice!"

One of my dear friends mentioned a message she heard years ago about a "pulpit conspiracy." It was about leaders enjoying being given a platform and opportunity to minister God's word but are not worried about people growing or implementing what they preach. As long as God's people sit quietly and listen to the speaker then nothing more will be expected. This is not what Jesus is after. We need to be delivered from this pulpit conspiracy.

Any time we look at God's word together we should consider some important questions to help us avoid simply gaining information without obedience.

- **What is Jesus speaking to you with this knowledge, and how will you respond?**
- **What are you planning on doing with this knowledge?** Articulate at least one step of obedience you will put into practice this week.
- **How will the hearing of this message affect your life?** This interrupts the consumer mindset that we have in the church world today.
- **How can I help you put His word into practice?**
- **How will what we heard affect us in loving God and serving others?** The endpoint of discipleship is our lives reoriented around loving God and loving and serving others. Jesus said over and over that these are the two most important things that we are to aim for.

Check out this article on discipleship <http://www.covenant-harvest.org/blog/2017/09/29/discipleship-in-the-midst-of-busy-lives/>

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